

Message Text

SECRET

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DRAFTED BY OSD/ISA:JMORRISON
APPROVED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY
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S E C R E T STATE 215736

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, NATO

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S LETTER TO SIMONET ON DEFENSE ISSUES

, PLEASE PASS FOLLOWING LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY TO
FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET.

2. QUOTE: DEAR HENRI, LAST MONTH SENATOR BYRD, AS
PRESIDENT CARTER'S EMISSARY, RAISED WITH PRIME MINISTER
TINDEMANS AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE VANDEN BOEYNANTS SOME
KEY ISSUES THAT YOU AND I HAVE DISCUSSED PREVIOUSLY
AND THAT CONTINUE TO GIVE MY GOVERNMENT CAUSE FOR CONCERN.

-- AIRBORNE WARNING AND CONTROL SYSTEM (AWACS): THIS IS
ONE OF THE KEY PROGRAMS FOR IMPROVING NATO DEFENSE.

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NATO'S CAPABILITY TO DETECT AND COUNTER AN AIR ATTACK
FROM THE WARSAW PACT WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCED
BY AWACS. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT EACH NATION INVOLVED
CARRY THROUGH WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM.
HENCE, I CANNOT EMPHASIZE STRONGLY ENOUGH HOW CRUCIAL
IT IS FOR BELGIUM TO CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY TO AWACS
ACQUISITION. NOT MAINTAINING THE PRESENT MOMENTUM

COULD JEOPARDIZE THE ENTIRE COOPERATIVE EFFORT; VIGOROUS SUPPORT FROM EACH COUNTRY WILL BE A STIMULUS TO ALL.

-- HAWK EUROPEAN LIMITED IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (HELIP):
THE HELIP PROGRAM IS PROCEEDING WELL IN NATO. WE APPRECIATE BELGIAN'S DECISION IN PRINCIPLE AND HOPE THAT THE CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE CONCLUDED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. UNLESS THIS IS DONE SOON, A 60 KILOMETER GAP WOULD BE OPENED IN THE HAWK BELT IN CENTRAL EUROPE. THIS PROGRAM NOT ONLY HELPS DEFEND BELGIUM ITSELF BUT SYMBOLIZES THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF NATO.

-- LONG-TERM DEFENSE PROGRAM AND INCREASED DEFENSE SPENDING: IN CONTRAST TO MOST OTHER ALLIES, BELGIUM'S POSITION ON INCREASING DEFENSE SPENDING BY 3 PERCENT IN REAL TERMS IS STILL UNCLEAR. AGAIN, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT EACH ALLY MEET THIS GOAL; IF WE DO NOT, THERE COULD BE ADVERSE REVERBERATIONS THROUGHOUT THE ALLIANCE. THE US IS UNDERTAKING TO MEET ITS COMMITMENT, AND WE ARE NATURALLY VERY INTERESTED IN THE EFFORTS OF OUR ALLIES. THE CONGRESS RECENTLY REQUESTED THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE TO PROVIDE DATA 0Y FEBRUARY 1, 1979 ON THE OFFENSE SPENDING OF OUR ALLIES. THIS IS THE SAME TIME THAT CONGRESS BEGINS TO CONSIDER THE US DEFENSE BUDGET. I HOPE WE WILL HAVE MUTUAL SUPPORT IN MOVING THE
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INCREASED DEFENSE BUDGETS THROUGH OUR GOVERNMENTS.

IN ADDITION, THERE IS THE BILATERAL ISSUE OF COLLOCATING WARTIME HEADQUARTERS FOR THE US EUROPEAN COMMAND WITH THE NEW SHAPE HEADQUARTERS. THIS IS ESSENTIAL TO INSURE THE CREDIBILITY OF US WARTIME REINFORCEMENTS AND THEREBY STRENGTHEN DETERRENCE. THE US WOULD BEAR THE ENTIRE FINANCIAL COST--SOME 48 MILLION DOLLARS -- OF THE COLLOCATION FACILITY, WHICH WOULD HAVE A LIMITED PEACETIME CADRE OF ABOUT 130 US PERSONNEL. THERE WOULD BE NO COST TO BELGIUM; INDEED, BELGIAN FIRMS AND WORKERS WOULD STAND TO GAIN FROM THE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM. IF A DECISION ON WARTIME COLLOCATION IS DEFERRED AND A POSITIVE DECISION NOT MADE UNTIL AFTER OCT OR NOV, THE EFFECT COULD BE TO DELAY PROGRESS ON PROJECT 85 AND SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASE THE COSTS OF CONSTRUCTION ON BOTH PROGRAMS.

LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT AGREEMENT TO WARTIME COLLOCATION WILL NOT IN ANY WAY PREJUDICE BELGIUM'S DECISION ON PEACETIME COLLOCATION.

I WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE HEARING FROM YOU ON THESE
IMPORTANT ALLIANCE ISSUES AND HOPE WE WILL HAVE AN
OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THEM AT THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIS SEPTEMBER.
SINCERELY, CYRUS R. VANCE.

END QUOTE.

CHRISTOPHER

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